



June 18, 2004

Marie Kurose, Program Officer
Paul G. Allen Foundation
505 – 5th Avenue South, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Ms. Kurose:

Please accept this letter of support for the *Inaugural Community Voice Mail Regional Hub Project* proposal which your foundation is currently considering. This project will build the capacity of the statewide Community Voice Mail ("CVM") system through consolidation of equipment, reduced telco costs and expanded opportunities for community outreach.

CVM was first brought to the attention of the Cisco Systems Foundation and Cisco Corporate Philanthropy by our Seattle, WA-based employees, who had already committed significant volunteer time to serving the organization. After an intensive due diligence process, we invested a broad range of in-kind and cash support, including products, real-estate space for the CVM National Headquarters, and customization and ongoing software support necessary to implement CVM in the 50 most populous US cities over five years. In the State of Washington, Community Voice Mail begins this important work by initiating its first-ever Regional Hub structure, which will serve the State of Washington via a single voicemail server—a stunning improvement over the multiple voicemail systems currently in use.

This is one of the few truly exemplary solutions that come across a program officer's desk because it is **effective, low-cost, easily replicable, and has concrete success metrics**—last year, 65% of users achieved their stated results, spending an average of 5 months on the service, at a cost per voicemail number of \$7.00 each month. In 2003, over 47,000 people were served via 1,912 social service agencies—metrics which will also improve dramatically with the current UNITY-based initiative.

Our Seattle employee Civic Council is engaged in supporting the CVM implementation in your funding region. I know that Washington State's economy has been one of the hardest hit in recent years, and this important service is a boon to disconnected workers seeking a way to get back on track. While the Cisco Systems Foundation has committed the resources to fund a generous 54% of the Washington State Regional Hub project as part of its \$2.5 million grant over 5 years, we invite and encourage the reciprocal involvement of local and regional funders to help us extend the impact of the program in their geographic areas. The effort is intentionally a hub-based, cost effective model that leverages resources, public relations efforts, and community momentum.

We invite you to consider funding this project in order to build the capacity of the Washington CVM program, and to create a blueprint for successful replication nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Tavernise".

Peter Tavernise
Senior Program Officer, The Cisco Systems Foundation/
Sr. Manager, Cisco Corporate Philanthropy, Cisco Systems, Inc.